



Public Health and Risk Communication

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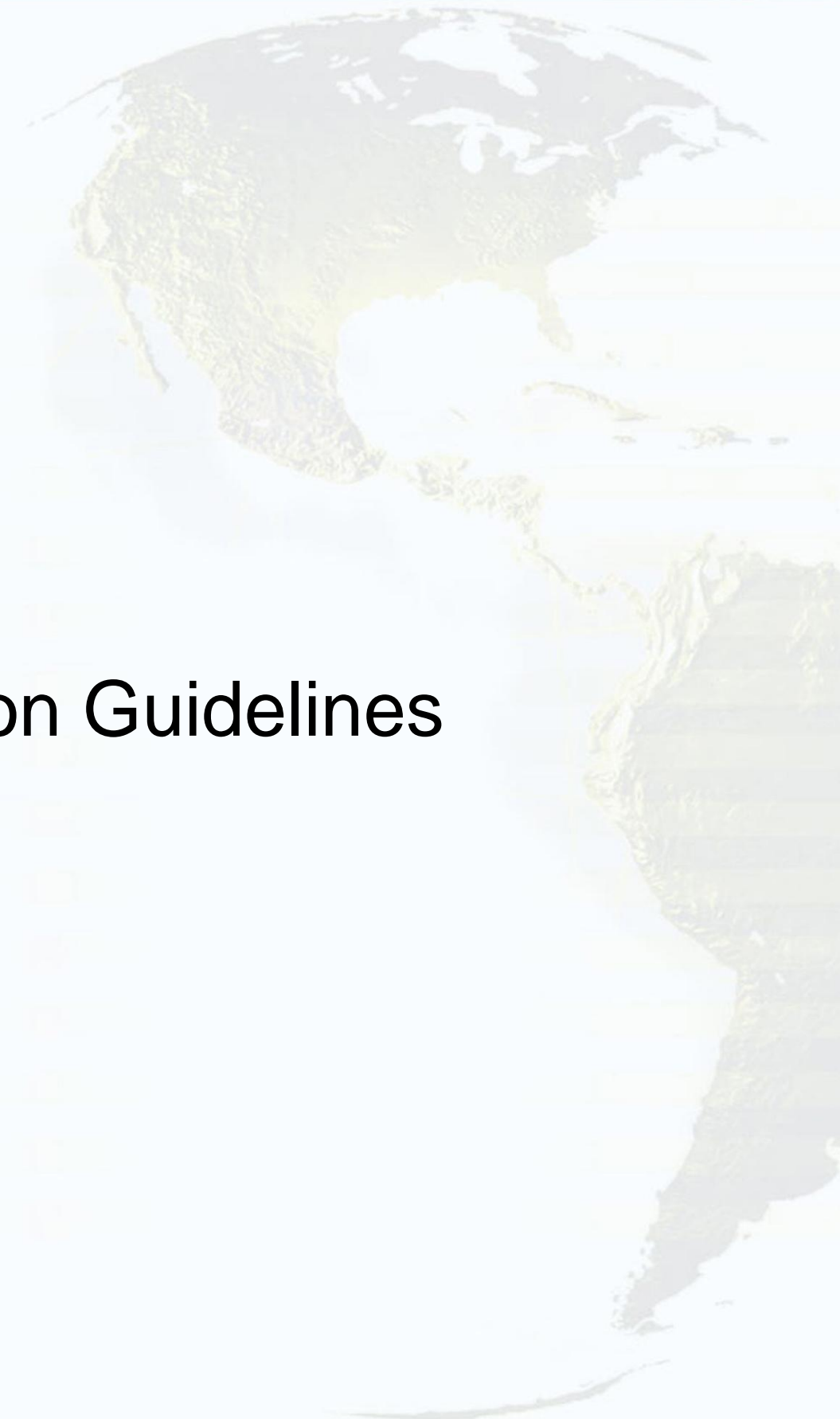
Pan American Health Organization/WHO

6 March 2012



Contents

- Context and definition
- SARS
- WHO Outbreak Communication Guidelines
- Paraguay Yellow Fever
- 2009 H1N1 Pandemic
- Lessons Learned



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The Pan American Health Organization

- World's oldest international public health agency
- Regional WHO office and sister OAS agency
- Based in Washington, DC, and 35 Member States



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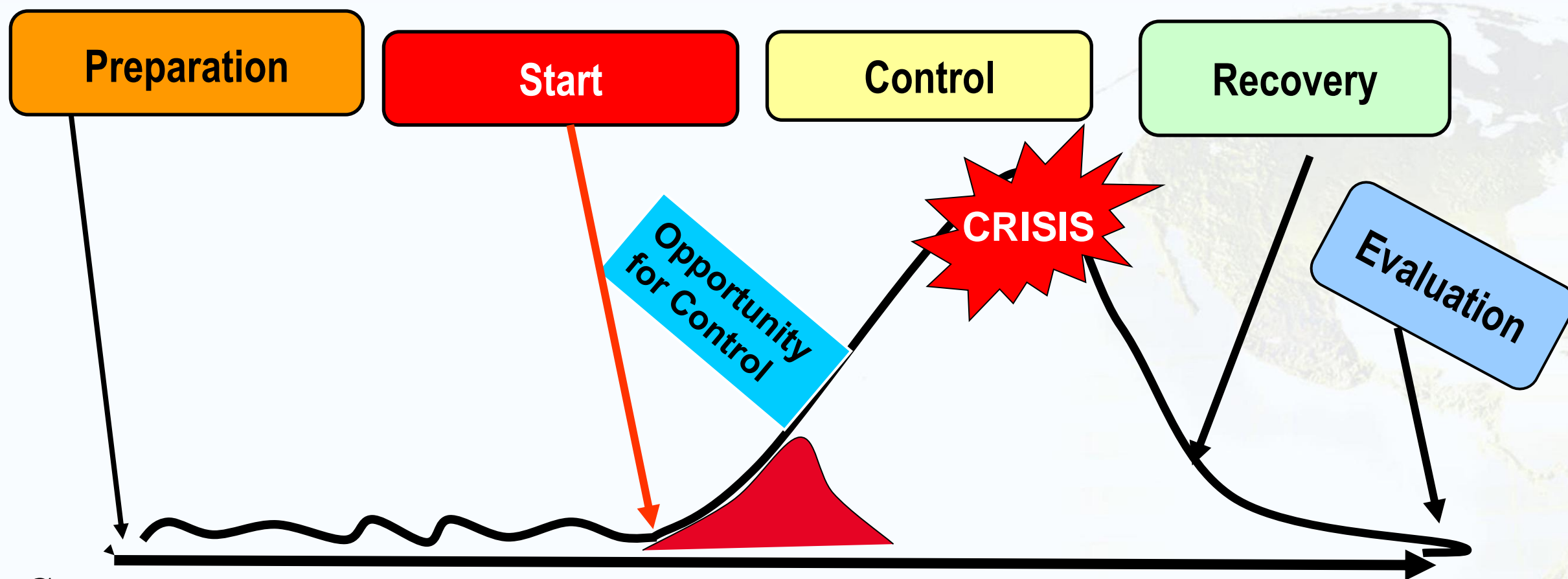


Risk Communication

Risk communication is an integral component of public health risk management. It is focused on dialogue with those affected and concerned and strives to ensure communication strategies are evidence based.

Under the IHR, risk communication for public health emergencies includes the range of communication capacities required through the preparedness, response and recovery phases of a serious public health event to encourage informed decision making, positive behaviour change and the maintenance of trust.





Components

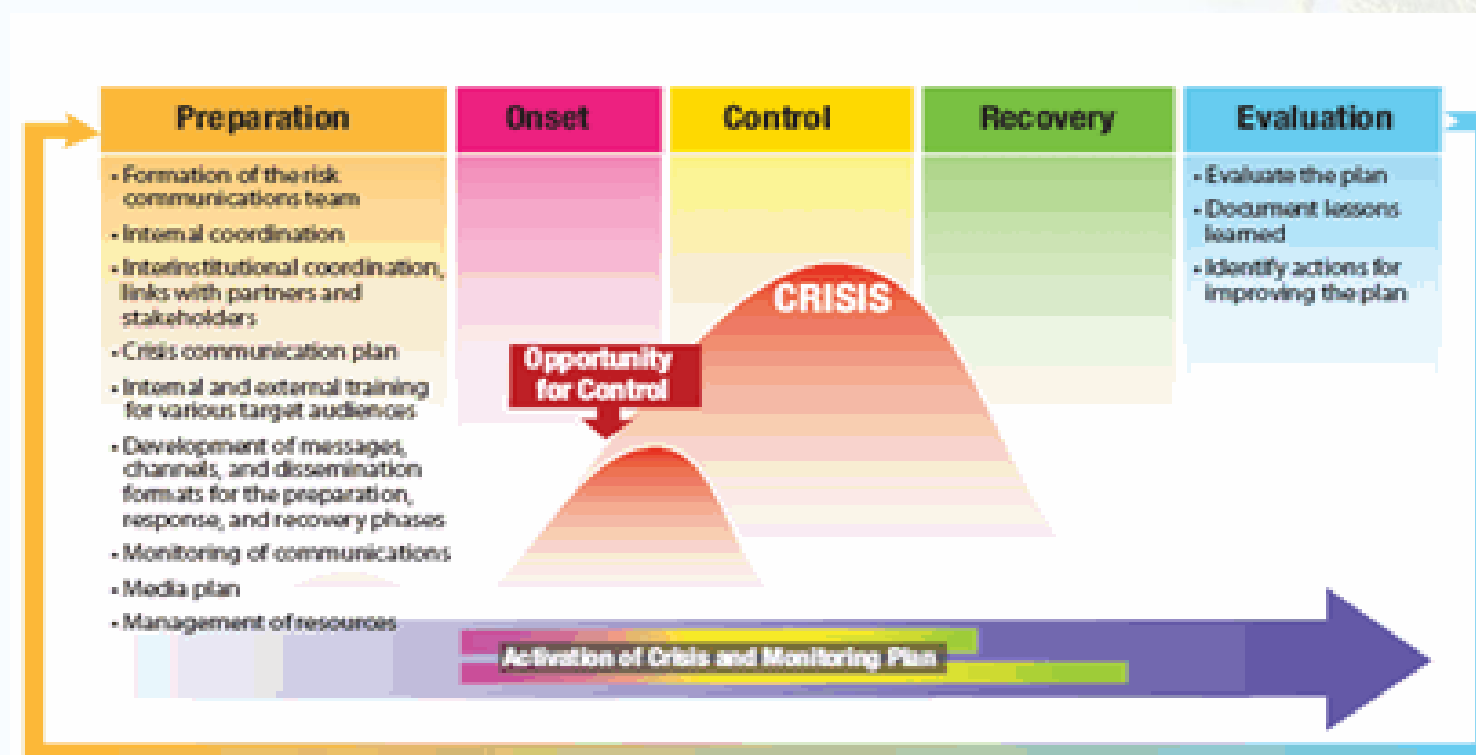
- Put together risk comm team
- Internal coordination
- Strategic alliances
- Risk communication plan
- Staff training
- Prepare messages
- Media Plan
- Communication surveillance
- Staffing plan

Activate crisis plan, etc.

- Evaluate work
- Document lessons learned
- Identify actions for improvement



Risk Communication Strategy



The figure depicts the phases of a risk communication strategy: preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery.

The figure illustrates a window of opportunity for bringing the situation under control following an outbreak through the implementation of crisis communication plans.

The post-crisis evaluation is essential to planning since it reveals weaknesses and documents the lessons learned so that needed changes can be made in future crisis plans.



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All Public Health Emergencies

- High economic and social impact
- Alarm in the population, uncertainty, fear, anger, anxiety
- Differing views and perceptions among officials and the public
- Need and desire for clear communication



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- Growing media interest = sensationalism
- International media presence
- Rapid transmission via internet and social networks
- Information gaps – filled by unofficial news sources
- Direct involvement of political actors





Role of Risk Communication During Public Health Emergencies

- Help at risk populations make informed decisions
- Encourage protective behaviors
- Complement existing surveillance systems
- Coordinate health and non-health partners
- Minimize social and economic disruption
- Maintain the **trust** required to prepare for, respond to and recover from serious public health threats



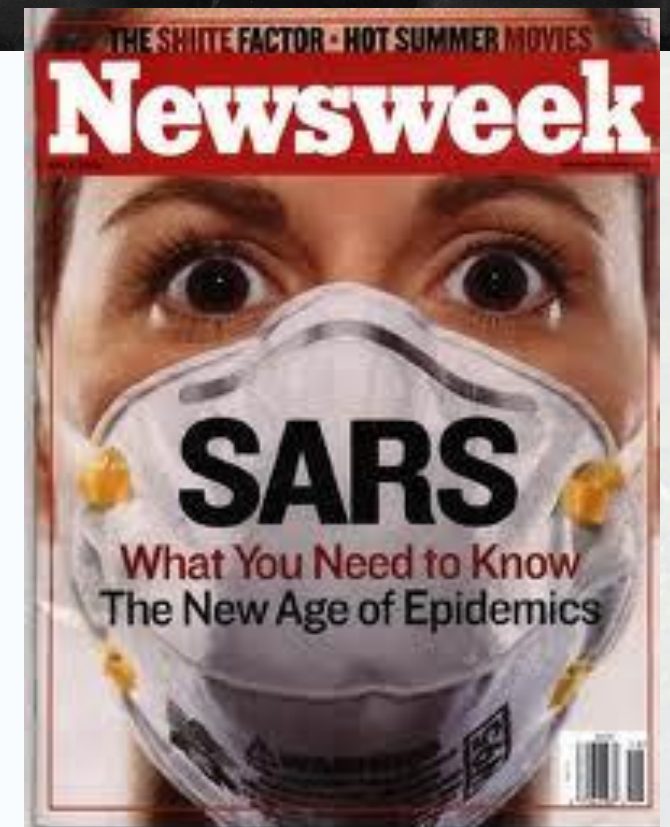
Not the Time To Plan Risk Communication





The First Global Outbreak of the 21st Century

- Started to emerge in late 2002
- Spread from China to 37 countries
- Around 9,000 cases, about 800 dead



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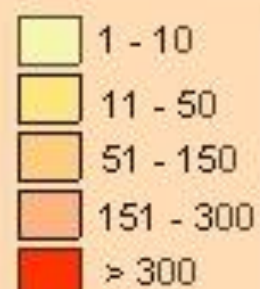
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SARS

Cases Distribution in

Affected Areas

Legend



Rec.	Country	Cumulative Cases	New Cases	No. of Death	No. of Patients Discharged
1	China	2914	161	131	1299
2	China, Hong Kong SAR	1557	30	138	710
3	Singapore	199	1	23	137
4	Canada	142	0	18	77
5	China, Taiwan	66	17	0	25
6	Vietnam	63	0	5	53
7	United States	41	2	0	0
8	Italy	8	4	0	3
9	Thailand	7	0	2	5
10	Germany	7	0	0	6



Map created with ArcIMS.

0 7562km



Zoom in --Click on the map and hold the left mouse button down, draw a extend you want to zoom in, and the release the mouse.





Social, Economic and Political Impact

- Schools Closed
- Transportation disrupted
- Tourism smashed
- Hospitals overwhelmed
- Billions lost

Chapter 5: SARS: lessons from a new disease

The impact of SARS

The economic impact of the SARS outbreak has been considerable and illustrates the importance that a severe new disease can assume in a closely interdependent and highly mobile world. Apart from the direct costs of intensive medical care and control interventions, SARS caused widespread social disruption and economic losses. Schools, hospitals, and some borders were closed and thousands of people were placed in quarantine. International travel to affected areas fell sharply by 50–70%. Hotel occupancy dropped by more than 60%. Businesses, particularly in tourism-related areas, failed, while some large production facilities were forced to suspend operations when cases appeared among workers.



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The Real Price? Lack of Trust, Transparency

What Happened

- Top secret report in China in January
- Unknown origin, unclear instructions
- Denial of severity and case burden
- China fires minister and says 339 dead, not 37 (April 2003)

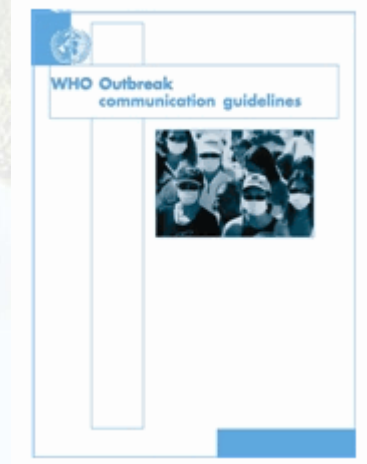
What That Triggered

- Government hiding something
- Vulnerable population
- Risks are downplayed
- Risk Perceptions, psychological impact



WHO Risk Communication Guidelines

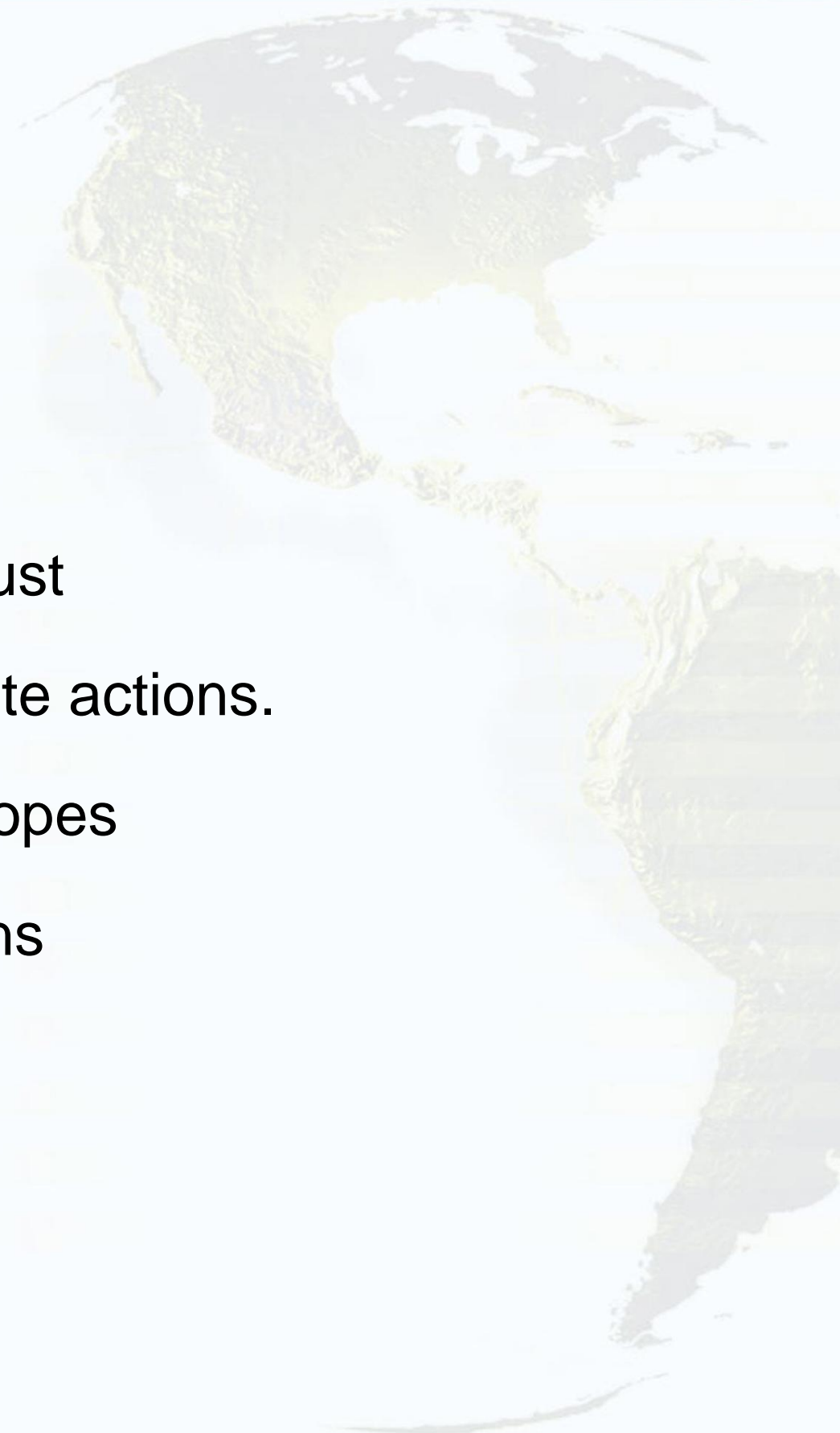
- Trust
- Transparency
- Early announcement
- Listening, communication surveillance
- Planning
 - WHO Expert Consultation on Outbreak Communications 2004





Trust

- Trust is earned before a crisis
- Need to take actions that maintain trust
- Enables population to take appropriate actions.
- Recognize uncertainty, avoid false hopes
- Include the public in decisions, actions
- Ask more of people





Transparency

- Explain the decision-making process
- Aim for total candor
- Key to maintaining confidence; linked to the quality, veracity and clarity of the information.
- Limits to transparency, balance rights and information



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Arguments For Transparency

- Rumors fill the information void
- Promotes protective behavior
- Keeps you out front as the information provider
- You can't hide outbreaks



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Post SARS

- Outbreak Guidelines
- Preparations for global transmission of H5N1
- Call by the head of WHO to include risk communication
- Countries created National Influenza Preparedness Plans
- Risk communication as a public health tool



Case Study Paraguay Yellow Fever 2008



Yellow fever crisis hits Paraguay

Thousands of people in Paraguay have been queuing for vaccines against yellow fever, after the first outbreak of the disease in 30 years.



People fear the disease will spread quickly

At least four people have died, and the government declared a state of emergency last week.

Health workers have given 160,000 vaccines in recent days, but officials say they need to administer many more.

Another health alert was declared in Paraguay last month amid a suspected outbreak of dengue fever.

Paraguay in a panic over yellow fever

Vaccine is in short supply amid the country's first outbreak in 34 years. As residents protest, officials scramble to secure supplies from abroad.

Comments 0 Share 0 +1 0 Tweet 0 Recommend



PEOPLE ARE DESPERATE : Residents of Luque, Paraguay, stand in line to be vaccinated against yellow fever. Thirteen cases have been reported, including three deaths. An outbreak of the disease has also occurred in neighboring Brazil. (Jorge Saenz / Associated Press)



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People line up to receive yellow fever vaccines in Luque, Paraguay, Tuesday, Feb 19, 2008. Eight people had died from Paraguay's first outbreak of yellow fever in 34 years. The government says authorities are conducting a massive vaccination campaign in high-risk areas.



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- * 4 K protest to demand vaccines
- * Crowds bang on health center doors
 - Rumors disease spreading quickly

“We want vaccines!” people shouted.

***MOH officials blame the media, call on press
“not to alarm” the population.***

Government declares state of emergency



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What Was Going On?





What Went Wrong?

Help for Paraguay in yellow fever outbreak

Posted 2/20/2008 5:58 PM | [Comment](#) | [Recommend](#)

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[Enlarge](#)

By Jorge Saenz, AP

Paraguayan student Aldo Leiva, left, who suffers from yellow fever, is helped onto a bed by his brother Nelson, right, and a hospital employee in Asuncion, Paraguay, on Wednesday. The illness has killed eight people in Paraguay since the outbreak there started.

ASUNCION, Paraguay (AP) — A massive shipment of yellow fever vaccine was on its way from France to help Paraguay deal with an outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease that has claimed eight lives, health officials said Wednesday.

This month's outbreak of yellow fever is the first reported in the South America country since 1974. All of the deaths came in districts outside the capital of Asuncion.

Skittish Paraguayans jostled nurses and doctors at public hospitals, demanding vaccines as authorities urged them to stay calm.

"At any moment more than 1 million doses will arrive from France," public health vice minister Antonio Barrios said. "Asuncion is not in any danger of infection."

Authorities said they previously received about the same number of doses donated by Brazil, Peru, Venezuela and other sources. But Barrios acknowledged that about 75% of those stocks were used up. France was asked to send doses because it is a leading manufacturer of the vaccine.

As Paraguayans formed long lines outside an Asuncion hospital to get the vaccine, city workers with heavy equipment cleaned up trash and brackish pools of standing water in the outlying district of Laureity, a district where 37 people were infected and five confirmed dead from yellow fever.

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- Mixed messages
- Untrained spokespersons
- Not giving a viable option
- Excluding the public
- Rumors
- Blaming the media
- Presidential elections



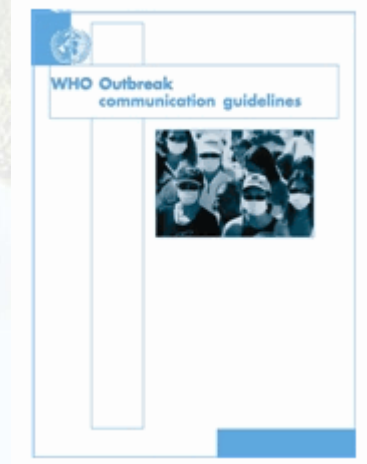
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WHO Risk Communication Guidelines

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- Early announcement
- **Listening, communication surveillance**
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Communication Surveillance

- Is the public worried and in need or reassurance?
- Is the public too calm and in need of warning?
- Are they angry and in need of calming?
- Crisis + heightened public emotions + limited access to facts + rumor, gossip, speculation, assumption, and inference = an unstable information environment, panic, bad decisions, danger, credibility



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Case Study: H1N1 Pandemic 2009

updated 5:49 p.m. EDT, Thu April 23, 2009

CDC confirms 7 cases of swine flu in humans

By Elizabeth Landau
CNN

(CNN) -- A total of seven cases of a previously undetected strain of swine flu have been confirmed in humans in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. None of the patients has had direct contact with pigs.



GETTY IMAGES

Swine flu is usually diagnosed only in pigs or people in regular contact with them.

The first two cases were picked up through a special influenza monitoring program, with stations in San Diego and El Paso, Texas. The program aims to get a better sense of what strains exist and to detect new strains before they become widespread, the CDC said. Other cases emerged through routine and expanded surveillance.

At this point, the ability for the human influenza vaccine to protect against this new swine flu strain is

Five of the cases have been found in California, and two have been found in Texas, near San Antonio, said Dr. Anne Schuchat, the CDC's Interim Deputy Director for Science and Public Health Program.

The CDC reported Tuesday that two children in the San Diego, California, area, infected with a virus called swine influenza A H1N1, whose combination of genes has not been seen in flu viruses in either human or pigs before.

The patients range from age 9 to 54, Schuchat said. They include two 16-year-old boys who attend the same Texas school, and a father and daughter in California.

"The good news is that all seven of these patients have recovered," Schuchat said.

Little Boy at the Center of a Viral Storm

5-Year-Old Identified as Earliest Swine Flu Case in Mexico Says, 'I Feel Good'

By Joshua Partlow
Washington Post Foreign Service
Wednesday, April 29, 2009

LA GLORIA, Mexico, April 28 -- One person who may have helped launch a rapidly spreading flu outbreak likes to draw hearts and flowers in the dirt. He likes to climb trees and play with his dog. Despite a persistent cough, he insists, feel sick.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- CDC: Five cases found
- All seven patients recovered
- Symptoms of swine flu
- Vaccine against human

Next Article in Health

This Story

Édgar Enrique Hernández, 5-year-old, tested positive for the deadly new strain of swine flu in a swept valley surrounded by pig-breeding

have not determined that swine flu started in Mexico. One of about 2,500 people in the state of Veracruz who got sick in late March, is the earliest confirmed case of the virus in Mexico. He was just one of many from La Gloria and surrounding areas who fell ill at the same time in an unexplained outbreak that left doctors prompted authorities to fumigate the

I don't have answers," said Édgar's mother, Carmen Hernández, as she cried under a tree in her living room. "I feel terrible about all of

GALLERY



At the Center of the Swine Flu Outbreak

Five-year-old Edgar Enrique Hernández, who got sick in late March, is the earliest confirmed case of the swine flu virus in Mexico.

» LAUNCH PHOTO GALLERY





The Definition of Risk Communication



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Mexico's Health Secretary Jose Angel Cordova, center, speaks during a news conference in Mexico City Saturday April 25, 2009. Federal authorities have extended school closures in the capital and two other states with swine flu outbreaks for 10 more days and he said in the news conference that the new strain has killed as many as 81 people in Mexico, though only 20 deaths have been confirmed. At left is Mexico's Secretary of Education, Alonso Lujambio, second from left, is the Secretary of Economy, Gerardo Ruiz, second from right, is the Secretary of Labor, Javier Lozano and at right, is the presidential spokesman, Maximiliano Cortazar. (AP Photo/Dario Lopez-Mills)



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- New Virus
- No drugs
- No vaccine

Only risk communication

 Comments  Recommend

OMS declara gripe porcina en México emergencia de salud

© 2009 The Associated Press
April 25, 2009, 6:01PM



Gregory Bull AP
Jorge Guzmán (derecha), cuyo hijo falleció el sábado 25 de abril del 2009 a consecuencia de la gripe porcina, abraza a una mujer, mientras otra da el pésame a su esposa, María Juárez (de sombrero blanco), en la Ciudad de México. La OMS advirtió que el brote de la enfermedad podría convertirse en pandemia (AP foto/Gregory Bull).

La Organización Mundial de la Salud advirtió el sábado que el brote epidémico de gripe porcina en Norteamérica es "una emergencia de salud pública", y que podría convertirse en una pandemia.

La OMS advirtió a los países de todo el mundo que estén alertas de cualquier brote inusitado de gripe luego que un nuevo virus fue relacionado con decenas de muertes en América del Norte.

Margaret Chan, directora general de la OMS, dijo que la epidemia en México y Estados Unidos constituía una "emergencia de salud pública, motivo de preocupación internacional".

La decisión significa que se pedirá a todos los países del mundo que intensifiquen los reportes y vigilancia de la evolución del padecimiento, de "potencial pandémico", porque se trata de una cepa de virus animal que infecta a la gente. Pero la dependencia no puede informar en este momento "si esto causará o no de hecho una pandemia", añadió la funcionaria.

Chan tomó la decisión de declarar la emergencia de salud pública de preocupación internacional tras consultar con expertos en influenza de todo el mundo. El comité de emergencia fue

updated 5:49 p.m. EDT, Thu April 23, 2009

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TEXT SIZE

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GETTY IMAGES
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At this point, the ability for the human influenza vaccine to protect against this new swine flu strain is uncertain, and studies are ongoing, she said.



First Announcements

Costa Rica anuncia caso de influenza

Sábado 2 de mayo de 2009 15:32 GYT



SAN JOSE (Reuters) - Costa Rica dijo el sábado que confirmó un caso de influenza H1N1 en su territorio, la primera vez que se detecta la enfermedad en América Latina fuera de México.

SON ONCE EN CA: 2 EN EL SALVADOR Y 8 EN COSTA RICA

Primer caso de influenza confirmado en Guatemala

Se trata de una niña de la capital que fue detectada por el cordón sanitario ubicado en el aeropuerto internacional La Aurora cuando regresaba de México

05/05/2009 **prensa.com** T.min 25° T.max 32°

elnuevodiario.co Panamá, viernes 8 de mayo de 2009

Las autoridades visitó México, le Salvador y och

Guatemala, de una niña que América, donde hay dos en El

ÚLTIMA HORA

LOCALES

Confirman primer caso

Getzalette Reyes
De prensa.com
greyes@prensa.com

11:48 a.m. - Las autoridades de salud confi de hoy la presencia del primer caso de la gr Panamá.

La ministra aclaró que este úni suspensión de las clases ni se movimiento a la población.

O GLOBO MUNDO BUSCAR

CAPA	PLANTÃO	MEU GLOBO	BLOGS	COLUNISTAS	COMUNIDADES	
PAÍS	RIO	CIDADES	ECONOMIA	MUNDO	CIÊNCIA	ESPORTES

Plantão | Publicada em 07/05/2009 às 19h01m

Primeiro caso de gripe suína do Brasil é registrado no Rio de Janeiro

Extra Online

★★★★★ DÊ SEU VOTO ★★★★★ MÉDIA: 1,0

RIO - O Hospital Universitário Clementino Fraga Filho (HUCFF) confirmou no início desta noite, após a liberação dos resultados dos exames pela Fiocruz, o primeiro caso de Influenza A. O paciente é um jovem de 21 anos que chegou ao Brasil de Cancún, em voo com escala na Cidade do México, no sábado, dia 2, e deu entrada na unidade na última terça, 5, depois de apresentar os sintomas da doença no domingo.

GRYPE PORCINA: CONFIRMAN PRIMER CASO EN EL PAIS

Es un hombre que volvió de México y ya tiene el alta

La ministra de Salud, Graciela Ocaña, sostuvo ayer que se continúa "evaluando" la reanudac

Confirma Cuba su primer caso de influenza

Cuba confirmó ayer el primer caso en la isla de Influenza A. Se trata de un joven mexicano que estudia medicina en la provincia occidental de Matanzas. Un comunicado del Ministerio de Salud Pública leído en el noticiero est

REDACCION EL UI
MARTES 12 DE

Confirma ministro de Salud de Perú primer caso de influenza

Oscar Ugarte dijo que se trata de una ciudadana peruana de 27 años que retomó al país en un vuelo de LAN el día sábado en la noche, desde Estados Unidos, en un vuelo directo de Nueva York.

Jueves, 14/05/2009 - 18:35

Lima.- El mi se trata de u

ZONAS - AMÉRICA LATINA

Ecuador confirma primer caso de influenza H1N1

PELILEO, Ecuador, mayo 15 - Ecuador confirmó su primer caso de la nueva cepa del virus de influenza H1N1, en un estudiante menor de edad que regresó al país la semana pasada desde Estados Unidos, dijo el viernes la ministra de Salud.

Ministerio de Salud Confirma Primer Caso de Influenza AH1N1 en Chile

El ac gripe epid

[Video con declaraciones del Ministro de Salud]

17-05-2009



Se confirman dos casos de gripe AH1N1 en Bolivia

28/5/2009

Los infectados son dos personas de origen boliviano, una madre de 39 años y su hijo de 7 años que arribaban de New York, Estados Unidos. Sus muestras fueron analizadas en el laboratorio cruceño, el único que tiene los reactivos para detectar la presencia del virus, el director de la Unidad de Epidemiología, Eddy Martínez indicó que las pruebas son altamente verídicas, pero necesitan una confirmación de la Organización Panamericana de Salud (OPS) y de la Organización Mundial de Salud (OMS) por eso es necesario mandar las muestras para el laboratorio en Estados Unidos, la reconfirmación llegará al país el próximo martes.

Eddy infec cono

Confirman dos casos de gripe A en Uruguay

En conferencia de prensa, la ministra de Salud Pública, María Julia Muñoz, confirmó que se trata de un hombre que estuvo en un campeonato ecuestre en Argentina; y una chica menor de edad, cuyos síntomas son leves y habría viajado a Buenos Aires.



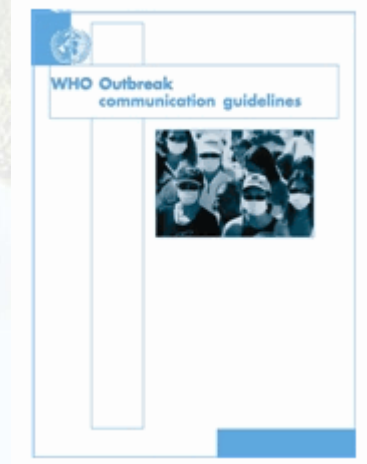
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WHO Risk Communication Guidelines

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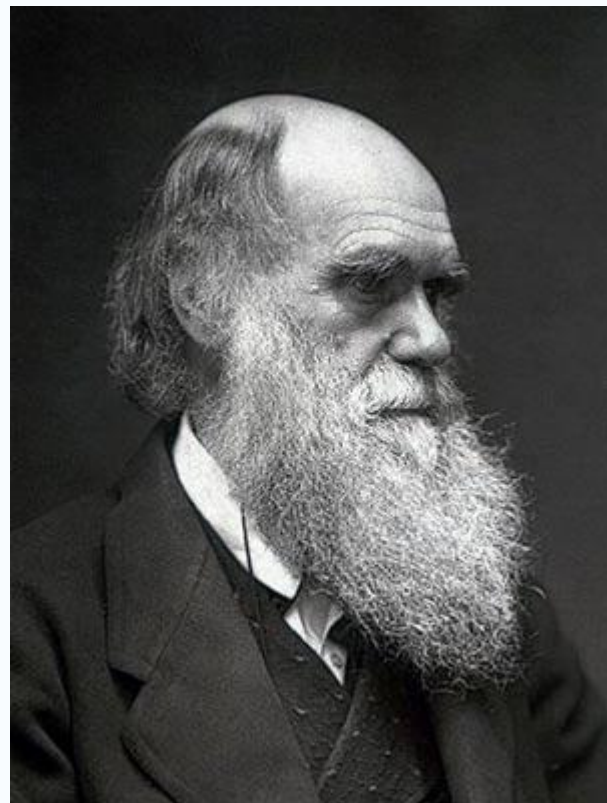
Early Announcement

- The opportunity to make the “first announcement” leads to trust, reduces rumors and can save lives.
- Acknowledge that the situation will change when there is more information.
- Shows leadership
- The lack of information is NOT a reason to put off the first announcement of a real or suspected outbreak.
- Inform of what you know, what you are doing, and what you want the public to do.





Planning



**It is not the strongest of the
species that survive, not the
most intelligent, but the one
most responsive to change.**

Charles Darwin, scientist



Planning

- Preparation since 2005 for H5N1
- Risk communication part of the preparation for all public health emergencies.
- Eliminates the crisis decisions
- A National Risk Communication Strategy includes a crisis plan
- Emphasis on preparation and prevention
- Regional and global networks



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Conclusions

- Risk communication is not a news release, poster or public relations
- Understanding and analyzing real and perceived risk is fundamental for the development of a risk communication strategy.
- If the public doesn't perceive a risk, they won't respond adequately to prevent it. The perception also can impede the response.
- Risk communication must include the public, the community, in their own languages and cultural norms.



Thank you!

For more information, please contact:
Bryna Brennan brennanb@paho.org

www.paho.org/riskcomm

